

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 1-20 without admission or disclaimer and add new claims 21-41 as shown in the following listing of claims, which replaces all previous listings and versions of claims.

1.-20. (canceled)

21. (new) A variable grip structure, comprising: a shaft body having a forward shaft portion and a rearward shaft portion that are rotatable relative to one another about a longitudinal axis of the shaft body; and an elastic finger-grip member disposed around and encircling the shaft body, the elastic finger-grip member having a forward part fixed to the forward shaft portion and a rearward part fixed to the rearward shaft portion so that relative rotation of the forward and rearward shaft portions elastically twists the elastic finger-grip member about the longitudinal axis.

22. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 21; including means for retaining the forward and rearward shaft portions in a relatively rotated state to thereby retain the elastic finger-grip member in an elastically twisted state.

23. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 22; wherein the means for retaining comprises ribs on

the forward shift portion that releasably engage with ribs on the rearward shaft portion.

24. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 22; wherein the means for retaining comprises a friction member interposed between the forward and rearward shaft portions.

25. A variable grip structure according to claim 21; wherein the forward and rearward shaft portions each have plural projections connected thereto and extending outwardly thereof, and the forward and rearward parts of the elastic finger-grip member each have plural recesses in which are engaged respective ones of the projections to thereby non-rotatably fix the forward and rearward parts of the elastic finger-grip member to the forward and rearward shaft portions.

26. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 25; wherein the sectional shape of the projections and recesses is generally T-shaped.

27. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 21; wherein the elastic finger-grip member has finger-contact portions that have a hardness different from other portions of the finger-grip member.

28. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 21; wherein the elastic finger-grip member has finger-contact portions that have a surface roughness different from other portions of the finger-grip member.

29. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 21; wherein the elastic finger-grip member has finger-contact portions that have a color different from other portions of the finger-grip member.

30. (new) A variable grip structure, comprising: a shaft body having forward, middle and rearward shaft portions that are disposed in series along a longitudinal axis of the shaft body, and a linking member extending axially through the middle shaft portion and being rotatable relative thereto, the linking member having a rearward end portion fixed to the rearward shaft portion and a forward end portion fixed to the forward shaft portion; and an elastic finger-grip member disposed around and encircling the shaft body, the elastic finger-grip member having a forward part fixed to the forward shaft portion and a rearward part fixed to the middle shaft portion so that relative rotation of the middle and rearward shaft portions elastically twists the elastic finger-grip member about the longitudinal axis.

31. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 30; including means for retaining the middle and

rearward shaft portions in a relatively rotated state to thereby retain the elastic finger-grip member in an elastically twisted state.

32. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 31; wherein the means for retaining comprises a friction ring interposed between the middle and rearward shaft portions.

33. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 31; wherein the means for retaining comprises a plurality of undulating ribs formed on an inner circumferential face of the middle shaft portion, and a plurality of undulating ribs formed on an outer circumferential face of the linking member and slidably engageable with the undulating ribs formed on the middle shaft portion.

34. A variable grip structure according to claim 30; wherein the forward and middle shaft portion each have plural projections connected thereto and extending outwardly thereof, and the forward and rearward parts of the elastic finger-grip member each have plural recesses in which are engaged respective ones of the projections to thereby non-rotatably fix the forward and rearward parts of the elastic finger-grip member to the forward and middle shaft portions.

35. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 34; wherein the sectional shape of the projections and recesses is generally T-shaped.

36. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 30; wherein the elastic finger-grip member has finger-contact portions that have a hardness different from other portions of the finger-grip member.

37. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 30; wherein the elastic finger-grip member has finger-contact portions that have a surface roughness different from other portions of the finger-grip member.

38. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 30; wherein the elastic finger-grip member has finger-contact portions that have a color different from other portions of the finger-grip member.

39. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 30; including means for limiting the extent of relative rotation of the middle and rearward shaft portions.

40. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 39; wherein the means for limiting comprises an arcuate groove formed in the middle shaft portion, and means on the

linking member for engaging with opposite ends of the arcuate groove to limit rotation of the middle and rearward shafts relative to each other.

41. (new) A variable grip structure according to claim 30; wherein the forward, middle and rearward shaft portions each have a tubular shape, and the linking member has a tubular shape and extends axially inside the forward, middle and rearward shaft portions.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Submitted herewith are two replacement sheets of drawing for Figs. 7-10 and Figs. 11-12 in which the following changes have been made:

In Fig. 8, reference numerals 3a and 7a have been changed to 3b and 7b and in Fig. 9, reference numeral 3b has been changed to 3c.

In Fig. 11, the reference numeral 14a (upper occurrence) has been changed to 15a.

These drawing corrections have been made to conform the reference numerals in the drawings to those described in the specification.